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Dear Mr. Hudson,

I respectfully ask the Cincinnati Zoo to stop breeding domestic cats for its Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW) program. With millions of companion animals languishing in our nation's shelters, it is irresponsible to bring more domestic cats into the world — particularly for the purpose of reproductive experiments. After five to eight years of trying to extract data relevant to endangered, non-domestic cats, CREW cats are "donated" to Summit Ridge Farms for further use in geriatric dietary experiments.

I have copied my comments to primary donors, whom I ask to suspend financial contributions until the Cincinnati Zoo discontinues breeding domestic cats and sending them to research labs at Summit Ridge Farms.

It is difficult to comprehend why anyone associated with a zoo would endorse a life of misery and isolation for ANY animal. Why not direct funds to on-site conservation studies or address population threats such as habitat preservation or poaching?

In "Limitations of Captive Breeding in Endangered Species Recovery," respected conservationists from Yale University, the National Zoo, and the San Diego Wild Animal Park state: "Captive breeding is no panacea for saving endangered species... Captive breeding should be viewed as a last resort in species recovery and not a prophylactic or long-term solution because of the inexorable genetic and phenotypic changes that occur in captive environments... [I]t should not displace habitat and ecosystem protection nor should it be invoked in the absence of comprehensive efforts to maintain or restore populations in wild habitats."

While the Cincinnati Zoo concentrates on *in vitro* fertilization methods, the enduring survival of endangered species is contingent upon their ability to thrive in the wild. Captive animals may lose their wild instincts in just two generations, the "Limitations of Captive Breeding" authors contend. One study shows only 11% of 145 captive-breeding programs have successfully released species into the wild. Researchers observe other drawbacks to captive breeding such as diminished fertility rates and insufficient administrative and funding stability to sustain lasting programs.

I strongly encourage you to stop breeding domestic cats as a "research model [to] provide basic reproductive information about felids in general." In addition, please do not ship older cats to Summit Ridge Farms, a facility cited by the USDA for Animal Welfare Act violations. Among other trespasses, Summit Ridge Farms failed to explore alternatives to painful procedures performed upon animals, failed to provide adequate dental care to dogs, and failed to maintain sanitary surfaces.

Thank you for considering public opinion in this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,